



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

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(left) Janani Balasubramanian. Photo: Rowan Haber
(right) Diana Guerrero-Maciá. Photo: Clare Britt



(left) Rebecca McNamara. Photo: Annelise Kelly, Tang Teaching Museum, Skidmore College.
(right) Erica Warren. Photo courtesy Erica Warren.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center Announces Four Lenore G. Tawney Fellows

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center today announced four Lenore G. Tawney Fellows who will pursue projects using the Arts Center's Tawney collection as a basis or inspiration for their work in 2023 and 2025.

The inaugural fellows named are artist and researcher Janani Balasubramanian, artist Diana Guerrero-Maciá, curator Rebecca McNamara, and curator and scholar Erica Warren.

"The response to our call for applicants was so impressive, the jurors decided to expand the scope of our first selection of fellows to include four individuals spanning multiple years rather than limit it to one fellow for the first year of the Lenore G. Tawney Fellowship program," said JMKAC Chief Curator Jodi Throckmorton.

It was a decision wholeheartedly embraced by the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, which granted the Arts Center \$1 million dollars in 2022 to establish an endowment funding the fellowship program.

“The Lenore G. Tawney Foundation is thrilled to continue its ongoing partnership with the John Michael Kohler Arts Center through this fellowship program, and grateful to every applicant for the thought, care, and creativity evidenced in their proposals,” said Lenore G. Tawney Foundation Director Kathleen Nugent Mangan. “We congratulate the inaugural fellows and look forward to their work with great anticipation.”

Janani Balasubramanian is an artist and researcher creating accessible, inviting, and beautiful portals to natural and computational worlds through sustained collaboration with scientists. Their practice includes installation, outdoor public art, emerging media, immersive performance, 2D image, poetry, and prose. Balasubramanian has received support for their work from the MacArthur Foundation, Tow Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, New York Community Trust, Jerome Foundation, UCross Foundation, Djerassi Art Center, and MAP Fund, among others. In 2023-2024, Balasubramanian will be the Denning Visiting Artist at Stanford University, jointly hosted by the Physics and Electrical Engineering Departments.

Diana Guerrero-Maciá's art practice includes painting, textiles, collage, print, and sculptural objects. Her abstract works engage with myth, iconography, symbols, and color. She is a 2021 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Fellow, and a MacDowell Fellow. Her works are held in multiple public and private collections. She has exhibited at the John Michael Kohler Art Center; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Artpace, San Antonio; Elmhurst Museum; and the Crocker Art Museum, among others. Guerrero-Maciá is an alumna of Skowhegan, Cranbrook Academy of Art, and Villanova University. She held residencies at Penland School of Craft and Haystack Mountain School of Craft. She is professor of art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Rebecca McNamara is associate curator at The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, where she creates exhibitions and publications; collaborates with faculty, visiting scholars, artists, and students to facilitate innovative projects and classroom lessons; and researches, catalogs, and digitizes the museum's collection. Her scholarship focuses on 19th-century through contemporary American art, craft, and material culture, with exhibitions including *Crazy Quilts: Stitching Memories* (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2017), *Radical Fiber: Threads Connecting Art and Science* (Tang, 2022; catalog forthcoming 2023), and *Paula Wilson: Toward the Sky's Back Door* (Tang, forthcoming 2023); her books include *Widows Unveiled: Fashionable Mourning in Late Victorian New York* (Cooper Hewitt/Parsons, 2016).

Erica Warren is a decorative arts and design curator and scholar. She currently serves as editor of *Craft Quarterly*, the James Renwick Alliance for Craft's magazine. Dr. Warren has curated many installations, including the critically acclaimed exhibitions *Bisa Butler: Portraits* and *Weaving beyond the Bauhaus*, both at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her recent publications include the essay "Beyond Weaving: Transdisciplinarity and the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop," published in *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture* (2021). As a complement to her curatorial and research practices, Dr. Warren teaches at the University of Chicago.

Jurors for the selection of fellows were curator and writer Glenn Adamson and artist Indira Allegra. Adamson is a curator and writer who works at the intersection of craft, design history, and contemporary art. Indira Allegra is an artist and founder of Indira Allegra Studio, a performative craft design studio using weaving as a ritual and conceptual framework to craft living structures off the loom and in the world.

“Lenore was a woman of the world, and each of these outstanding fellows demonstrates the intellectual rigor, wonder and care needed to express ways in which Tawney’s archive makes meaningful contributions to the history of art and more broadly, to the world itself,” said Allegra.

Adamson added, “Lenore Tawney left so much to history—not only her sublime and transcendent artworks, but the whole world that she created in her studio, densely populated in ways both tangible and intangible. This pathbreaking fellowship program is a chance to extend her creative legacy, in ways that she herself would have found deeply satisfying.”

Lenore G. Tawney Fellowships are open to scholars, writers, curators, and artists of all nationalities, at all educational levels, and from all disciplines.

Lenore Tawney’s (1907–2007) innovative interpretations of traditional fiber practices were central to shifting the perception of weaving from a utilitarian craft to fiber art as we know it today. Tawney’s unorthodox sculptural works took weaving beyond the expected flat rectangular format, moving fiber art off the wall and into three-dimensional space. Tawney’s interdisciplinary oeuvre also spanned drawing, collage, and assemblage.

In 2019, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center worked closely with the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation to acquire key components from the artist’s last studio environment with assistance from Kohler Foundation, Inc. The 486-piece collection includes artwork, collages, assemblages, furniture, and supplies. An installation of Tawney’s studio environment is on view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center’s Art Preserve in Sheboygan, Wis., which provides the public and researchers year-round access to an unparalleled collection of art environments that includes works by more than 30 artists.

For more information about the John Michael Kohler Arts Center and the Art Preserve, visit jmkac.org. Admission and parking at both locations are free.

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About the Jurors

Glenn Adamson is a curator and writer who works at the intersection of craft, design history, and contemporary art. He has previously been director of the Museum of Arts and Design; head of research at the V&A; and curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee.

Adamson’s publications include *Fewer Better Things* (2019), *Art in the Making* (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson), *The Invention of Craft* (2013), *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion* (2011), *The Craft Reader* (2010), and *Thinking Through Craft* (2007). He contributes regularly to *Art in America*.

Adamson was the co-curator of *Crafting America* at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (2021), *Objects: USA 2020* at R & Company Gallery (2021), *Voukos: The Breakthrough Years* at MAD (2016), *Beazley Designs of the Year 2017* at the Design Museum in London, and *Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery* at the Yale Center for British Art (2017). His biographical study of the artist Lenore Tawney is included in the John Michael Kohler Art Center’s exhibition catalogue *Mirror of the Universe*.

His book *Craft: An American History* was published by Bloomsbury in January 2021. He is currently at work on *A Century of Tomorrows*, a new book about the history of the future.

Indira Allegra is an artist and founder of Indira Allegra Studio, a performative craft design studio using weaving as a ritual and conceptual framework to craft living structures off the loom and in the world. Allegra’s work has been featured in *Artforum*, *Art Journal*, *BOMB Magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and KQED, and in exhibitions at the Museum of Arts and Design, the

Arts Incubator in Chicago, Center for Craft Creativity and Design, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Museum of the African Diaspora, among others. Their writing has been featured in *Theater*, *TEXTILE: Cloth and Culture*, *American Craft Magazine*, *Manual: A Journal About Art & Its Making*, *Cream City Review* and *Foglifter Journal*, among others.

Allegra has been the recipient of numerous awards including Creative Capital, United States Artists Fellowship, Burke Prize, Gerbode Choreographer Award, Art Matters Fellowship, Mike Kelley Artist Project Grant, and Lambda Literary Fellowship.

About the John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Founded in 1967, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) is dedicated to generating creative exchanges between an international community of artists and a diverse public. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts, community arts initiatives, and publications.

The Arts Center's collection focuses primarily on works by artist-environment builders, self-taught and folk artists, and works created in the Arts/Industry residency program. JMKAC is the world's leading center for research and presentation of artist-built environments.

In June 2020, the Arts Center opened the Art Preserve, a satellite campus highlighting its collection of 25,000 individual works of art by more than 30 art-environment builders. The Art Preserve features immersive displays of art environments and curated visible storage of environment components. It also serves as a resource for research on art environments and the artists who create them.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is supported by corporate and foundation donors, government grants, and its many members. The Arts Center is not an entity of Kohler Co. or its subsidiaries.

Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Thursday: 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday: 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Locations

John Michael Kohler Arts Center: 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI

Art Preserve: 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI

About the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation

The Lenore G. Tawney Foundation was established in 1989 by pioneer fiber artist Lenore Tawney (1907–2007) for charitable and educational purposes. Tawney endowed the Foundation with her life's resources—both artistic and financial.

Consistent with her philanthropic interests, the Foundation supports the visual arts with a focus on craft media. It makes its art collection and archive available as resources for exhibitions and scholarly study, awards scholarships and fellowships for professional art education, and supports other special projects as Tawney envisioned. Its broad aim is to increase public access to and knowledge about the visual arts and to assist learning opportunities for emerging artists and scholars.